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New Orleans States-Item

Insurance Firm Settles

Widow Gets $8 Million

The widow of a murdered Oklahoma rancher yesterday received an $8 million settlement in her $18 million lawsuit against a Georgia life insurance firm.

The murdered man, E. C. Mullendore III, was the brother-in-law of New Orleans Saints owner John Mecom Jr.

The recipient of the $8 million settlement was Mrs. Linda Mullendore.

MRS. MULLENDORE had filed suit against United Family Life Insurance Co. of Atlanta which had refused to pay the face value of three $5 million policies on her husband's life. The settlement was made in Tulsa Okla., where the suit was to be heard next month. A U.S. District Court judge had delayed pretrial conferences, indicating a settlement was near.

Mullendore was murdered on the nght of Sept. 26, 1970, in the den of his expensive ranch home on the Cross Bell Ranch the largest family-owned spread in Oklahoma.

The murder remains unsolved.

Mecom is married to Mullendore's sister, Katsy.

After the 32-year-old Mullendore was found slain, beaten about the head—probably with a branding iron—and shot once squarely between the eyes, it was learned that less than a year earlier he had taken out the $15 million in life insurance with the Atlanta firm.

THE POLICY was taken out through two Atlanta insurance agents Mullendore met through Mecom. The same agents wrote $500,000 policies on the lives of former Saint Steve Stonebreaker and Doug Atkins.

When the insurance company refused to pay off the policies, Mrs. Mullendore filed suit. The face value of the policy and interest accumulated since Mullendore's death raised the amount of the suit to $18 million. It was believed to be the largest single life insurance claim in history.

The Wall Street Journal reported last month that United Family Life Insurance actually had held on to only $40,000 of the $15 million in policies on Mullendore's life, "farming out" the remainder to more than 100 other insurance companies around the nation.